

HOW INTERPRET THE APOCALYPSE?

AS NATURALISTS?

OR AS SUPERNATURALISTS?

A Refutation of the Historic Interpretation,

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE

REV. G. GUINNESS'

"APPROACHING END OF THE AGE."

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HOW INTERPRET THE APOCALYPSE?

THE Rev. Grattan Guinness, in his book on "The Approaching End of the Age," p. 465, inserted a challenge to any one to discuss with him two questions connected therewith—(1) *the literality or symbolism of the Apocalypse*; and (2) *the year-day theory*. He thought that the discussion of these points from the platform, or by the press, would be easy, would be profitable to believers, and that discussion would make it clear on which side the truth lies. Agreeing with him on these points I wrote, accepting the challenge. I received the reply, that he must defer the matter, as he was on the eve of a distant voyage, with a view to visit some missionary stations. This was a virtual refusal. But though the controversy is thus altered in form, it may yet advance and be decided. With a view to this result the following pages are commended to the consideration of my brethren in the faith, and to the blessing of our God.

In this controversy, I trust nothing will fall from my pen derogatory to the character of my Christian brother, in whose excellent work of sending forth missionaries of the cross I heartily sympathize. We agree in the great fundamentals of the faith, and are one in the belief of Christ's pre-millennial advent.

I proceed then to my subject. Of the two points proposed for discussion one is quite subordinate, and I leave it untouched. The great question is—ON

WHAT PRINCIPLE IS THE BOOK OF REVELATION TO BE INTERPRETED? Is it to be regarded as 'a sealed book,' 'a book of symbols'? Or is it, as I affirm, and trust to prove, mainly to be accepted *literally*? If that be so, the year-day theory falls out of view. *That* has arisen out of the belief, that 'the Apocalypse is a continuous history of the Christian church.' But if so, then, as the church dispensation has continued for well nigh two thousand years, 1260 *days* seems to be an insignificant period of time. Then enters the idea, that days must be held to mean years. But if the prophetic portion of the Apocalypse have not begun, and cannot begin till the churches of Christ are no longer recognized by God, the year-day theory comes to an end. The days of the Apocalypse are literal days.

Mr. Guinness and others distinguish the conflicting principles of interpretation, as PRESENTIST and FUTURIST, respectively. Now these are great features of the two systems. But the argument should go much deeper. The main question, as I affirm, and purpose to prove, is—*Are miracles of judgment foretold as about to characterize the latter day?* I affirm that they are, and will append proofs. But if so, then the *Presentist* or *Historic Interpretation* falls to the ground.

First, a word concerning the amount of mystery or literality in the Apocalypse.

The Naturalist or Historic Interpreter* confesses, that though the book be 'symbolic,' there are parts of it that are literal. The Literal or Supernatural Interpreter allows, that some parts of the book are not to be taken literally. The controversy then turns on the question, *How much of the book is to be accepted literally? How much symbolically? And how*

* The argument, then, requires another and deeper name.
(1) Naturalist, or (2) Supernaturalist.

shall we distinguish between the two? I assume, then, and propose to prove, that *the main body of the book is to be accepted in the letter; and that mystic interpretation then only has legitimate standing, where absurdity moral, or absurdity metaphysical, results.*

I must next object to the terms 'symbol' and 'symbolic,' and beg those who use them to define their meaning. What is a symbol?

In discussing Scripture subjects let us as far as possible keep to Scripture terms. Now the Apocalypse does not speak of 'symbols,' but it employs another word. It speaks more than once of '*mystery*.'

Let us look at the occurrences of the word:—

1. John sees in the Saviour's hand seven *stars*, and He was walking amidst seven *golden candlesticks* (or more accurately, 'lamp stands, and lamps'). Now of these two objects we read—"The *mystery* of the seven *stars* which thou sawest on my right hand, and the seven *golden candlesticks*. The seven *stars* are the *angels* of the seven churches; and the seven *candlesticks* which thou sawest are seven churches:" i, 20.

2. In the xviith chapter we read of a woman in scarlet array. "And upon her forehead was a name written,* *a mystery*, 'Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots, and of the abominations of the earth.'"

Then comes the explanation. "The woman which thou sawest is the *great city*, which holds the kingdom over the kings of the earth."

From these examples it appears, that by a '*mystery*' in this book is meant something that has two places. When it is away from its present and actual place, it is seen *in emblem*. When spoken of, or beheld in, its usual place, it is dealt with *literally*.

The churches and pastors of Christ have two places

* Here and there the author varies from the Authorized Translation. The appeal then is to the Greek, and to its critical editions, for the received text of this book is faulty.

(1) One in heaven, as related to the heavenly sanctuary of which Jesus is the risen Priest, and of which Moses' tabernacle was the earthly copy. There they appear as candlesticks and stars. (2) But Jesus explains by giving us their present and actual place on earth; and then they are churches, and angels of churches. In heaven they are lamps and stars; for they enlighten angels concerning God's multiform and varied wisdom (Eph. iii, 9, 10). But on earth they are gathered assemblies of believers.

So Babylon has two places. (1) Its literal one was on the Euphrates where it was first built, and to which it will one day be restored. It is shown accordingly as the literal city, in Rev. xviii. (2) But at present its place is occupied during the mystery of God's patience by another city. Its form and its place are changed; while its spirit is still that of the old and literal Babylon. Hence it is shown us under the *emblem* of a *woman*, whose spiritual attributes are shadowed forth in chapter xvii. The Babylon of the xviith chapter of the Apocalypse is Rome. What was meant by the Woman needed to be explained; and explanation is given. It remains the mystic Babylon, only during the time of the 'Mystery of God.' When that is finished, the ten kings of Antichrist burn the mystic Babylon, or Rome; the remnant of the doomed city returns to literal Babylon; and the literal people of God, or Israel, reappear upon the scene. Hence there are two destructions of Babylon; for there are really two Babylons to be destroyed. (1) The mystic Babylon is burnt by the false Christ and his ten kings, which are described in chapter xvii as heads and horns. (2) But there is a second destruction of Babylon in the xviiiith chapter, which comes suddenly and directly from the hand of God. An earthquake hurls literal Babylon into the depths of earth, after she has become the chief city of the world's commerce. This Rome never has been, or will be.

So with regard to the mysteries of the xviith chapter. The *Woman* of that chapter is not literally to be taken. It is a *city*. Nor is the Babylon spoken of the literal Babylon. It is mystic Babylon that is presented to us in the xviith. The ancient and literal Babylon has been, during this dispensation, supplanted by a city which is morally one with it in its spiritual aspect.

For it is now the time of God's patience and of His mercy. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, *the mystery of God shall be finished*:" x, 7.

How many 'mysteries' are there in this book? It is not easy to say. But I think there may be said to be at the highest reckoning forty, *of which one-half is explained*. "Golden *vials* (bowls) full of *odours*, which are the *prayers* of the saints:" v, 8. Here we have the two places of the object. (1) As seen in *heaven*, the prayers are beheld as bowls full of incense. (2) As referred to *earth*, they are literally prayers of saints. There are then not more than twenty unexplained mysteries; that is, not one to each chapter. Mystery is not the staple of the book; it is not to be regarded as in general enigmatic or figurative.

Let us now take a look at the NATURALIST THEORY OF INTERPRETATION, and especially that accepted by Mr. Guinness.

It supposes, then, (1) That the Revelation is a continuous history of the church. (2) That its prophetic part began to be fulfilled in John's day. (3) That the seals give the decline of the pagan Roman empire, and the overthrow of paganism by Constantine. (4) That the rainbow-angel of chapter x, and the witnesses of chapter xi, foretell the Reformation. (5) That the plagues mean only political events, and that we are now living under the sixth vial. Finally, (6) That the book is to be interpreted by profane history. (7) That the Popes are the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, the Wild Beast of Apocalypse.

Are these things so?

1. '*The Apocalypse is a continuous history of the church.*' In what sense do you speak of '*the church*'? Do you mean the one mystic body of Christ gathering during this dispensation by the Holy Ghost? the spiritual members united to Christ the Risen Head by the Holy Spirit? No! For that is not treated of by profane history. Do you mean the various assemblies of believers scattered throughout the world? No! Because for ages there were no assemblies of believers whom Christ could own as lights in heaven, or living corporate witnesses to Him on earth. You mean, then, the history of Christendom, or of the Christian dispensation.

Does, then, the appeal to history prove that the Revelation has been fulfilled? By no means. Men full of zeal, and competently acquainted with history, have attempted to prove the fulfilment of its prophecies, and have not succeeded. Great are the diversities of view among those who have laboured in this field. If we take the chapters concerning whose completion the Allegorists or Symbolic Interpreters are most nearly agreed, great and many are the gaps in their interpretation; as I have proved in my book—*The Locusts, the Horsemen, and the Two Witnesses*. I have gone through the general views of the Historic Interpreters in my work—*The Apocalypse Expounded by Scripture*; and have shown how completely they fail in detail.

Let me take here but one or two points. The Apocalypse (ix, 5, 6) affirms, that there will be a time, when the inhabitants of the earth, stung by creatures from the bottomless pit, will be for five months so fearfully tormented that they will prefer death to life; while nevertheless they will not be able to commit suicide, or to find death. Has ever any such state of things occurred, I say not, in Christian times; but ever since the world was created? But if

not, all theories about the locusts being the Saracens must be false. Have ever two-hundred millions of horsemen issued from Euphrates, slaying the third of mankind? (ix, 16, 18.) If not, we have here judgments on God's part, and a state of things on men's part, never yet realized. And the Naturalist or Historic Interpretation is false.

Observe again:—

MIRACLES ARE FORETOLD AS COMING IN THE LATTER DAYS.

Now if miracles are foretold in other portions of Scripture as about to come to pass, and if the descriptions in Revelation be similar to those predictions of miracle, *then miracles are foretold in the Apocalypse*. But if so, the plagues are to be taken literally. Explained as symbols, they are made to mean natural and political events which have already occurred. Though naturalist interpreters, if pre-millennarians, are compelled to be inconsistent with themselves in not only confessing, but teaching, that the coming of Christ before the millennial day, the destruction of the armies of earth, the binding of Satan, and reign of the saints, are something literally to be accepted, and predicting things supernatural. How is it, then, brethren, we ask, *that you thrust off miracle from the major part of the Apocalypse*, yet are *obliged to accept it at the close*? How do you distinguish? You believe that there are two classes of events in the book. The one class describes mere *natural* and political events, which have already come to pass. The other presents supernatural events yet to come. Will you show us, how the descriptions of the events, which you own to be supernatural, differ from those which you would have us accept as merely natural?

We say, that such distinction can only be arbitrary.

The supernaturalist is consistent in his interpretation. *You are not*. The Old and New Testaments are

founded on miracles, literally described. Take symbolicality as your guide, and your exposition is cut loose from the Old Testament; and from Israel; God's great earthly centre in days past, and in the days to come. Take literality as your guide, and kindred passages to those of the Apocalypse spring up both in Moses and the prophets. Here is one of the proofs that Futurism is true.

I come, then, to the proof, that MIRACULOUS EVENTS, PROCEEDING BOTH FROM GOD AND FROM SATAN, ARE PROMISED IN BOTH THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW! Now if they are foretold in passages which are confessedly literal, then like passages in the Apocalypse are to be accepted as literal and miraculous.

Moses foretells a system of miracles of judgment as about to occur, which has never been fulfilled.

After the sin of the calf, which has never been forgiven, and which is to be avenged in a day to come,* the Lord made a new covenant with Moses himself, as the Mediator of Israel. And this is its tenor. "Behold, I make a covenant: *before all thy people I will do marvels (wonders), such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a TERRIBLE THING that I will do with thee:*" Ex. xxxiv, 10.

How is it, that this covenant to work greater miracles of judgment on Israel, and before Israel and the nations, has dropped out of view? What is the Apocalypse, but a fulfilling by the Most High of this terrible covenant? Must not Israel of the Apocalypse then be the literal Israel, to fulfil this, God's Word?

The past miracles wrought in Egypt are described in like terms: "I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my *wonders* which I will do in the midst thereof:" Ex. iii, 20.

* Ex. xxxii, 34.

These wonders of judgment are to affect Israel. That the Naturalist System almost entirely shuts out Israel, is another of its failures.

In the Book of Deuteronomy we have the last instructions of Moses. In the xxviiith chapter the Mediator of Israel presents to his nation the blessings to follow on the observance of the law, and the curses which were to visit them for breaches of it. Some of these are supernatural; for rain, powder, and dust are to be poured down from heaven so as to destroy them: v. 24. Diseases not to be healed are to be sent: v. 27, 60, 61. An invading supernatural army is foretold, whose description answers to that of the terrible plague of the horsemen in Rev. ix; Deut. xxviii, 49—52. Jehovah will send on Israel great plagues, and *wonderful* ones (v. 59), even all those written in the law (v. 61).

To the covenant made with Moses alone a new one with the nation of Israel was added, just before the death of Moses. On the breach of this covenant, God was to smite the land of promise in a way that never has been fulfilled. See the awful description:—

"So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it; *And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:* Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them: And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day": Deut. xxix, 22—28.

This is literal, as literal as the Land of Promise, and as the destruction of Sodom. Now the outburst of a volcano in the land of Israel would fulfil this threatening. It would also fulfil the description of the first woe-trumpet (the fifth): Rev. ix, 1, 2.

See also Leviticus xxvi, as containing threats of Jehovah to send plagues of deepening intensity on Israel, if His earlier ones failed to induce repentance: Lev. xxvi, 18, 21, 24, 28.

Take a passage or two from the prophets of Israel. The same scene of frightfulness and desolation, with a more prominent view of the locusts which torment men, is given in Joel i, ii. A brief portion is quoted by Peter: "*I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth; blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.*" Now these signs and wonders are found in the Apocalypse. The blood, fire, and pillars of smoke occur in the first and fifth trumpets: Rev. viii, ix. Signs in the sun and moon are to *precede* the terrors of the Day of Judgment on the living. If so, then the sixth seal, with its darkened sun and moon, is to be taken literally.

"The day of the Lord is *great and* VERY TERRIBLE: and who can abide it?" Joel ii, 11.

The judgments of Jehovah in the latter day are *to be like those of Egypt*. For indeed the remnant of Israel is a second time to be delivered out of that land. "*The Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian Sea* [which Israel traversed by miracle in Moses' day]; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river [Euphrates], and shall smite it into* seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; *like as it*

was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt:" Isa. xi, 11, 15, 16.

Again, "*According to the days of thy coming up out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him (Israel) MARVELLOUS THINGS:*" Mic. vii, 15; Zech. x, 10. Were the plagues of Egypt miraculous? So shall those be which are to come. Here, then, is ample warrant to interpret the plagues of the trumpets and vials literally. But if so, Futurism is true, for it teaches the supernaturality of the plagues of the Apocalypse. The passages above cited from the Old Testament as being spoken to the men of the letter, are literal. As spoken to the unforgiven nation of Israel, and to the sinners of the Gentiles, they foretell literal plagues of judgment.

For further proof, turn we to the New Testament.

1. What says the Saviour in His taking leave of Israel, and the temple? "*Great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famine, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven:*" Luke xxi, 11. O then! the earthquakes of Revelation, and the "fearful sights" there predicted are literal! Again, "*There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;* and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men fainting for fear (*Greek*), and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they *see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory:*" 25—27. O then! the plagues which precede Christ's literal advent are also literal!

2. Paul tells us, that there will be a *conflict of miracle* between God's servants, and the Devil's. "Evil men and seducers* (magicians) shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." "*Now as*

* There is no 'the' in the original, and it gives a wrong sense.

* Γοηται.

Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses [how was that? by miracle! Ex. vii, 11], so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the truth. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was:” 2 Tim., iii, 8, 9.

That Satan shall put forth his powers of miracle in his servants, our Lord is a witness. “There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall *show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect:*” Matt. xxiv, 24. No such wonders have yet been wrought: much less before Israel by false Christs. O then, the signs and wonders wrought by the false Christ and false Prophet of the Apocalypse are real signs, and not ‘lying wonders:’ Rev. xiii, 13, 14; xvi, 14; xix, 20. That they are real miracles, is shown by the power which they exert alike on kings and commoners, to make them believe in and worship the false Christ, and under his banner at length to fight against the true Christ.

See for a final passage 2 Thess. ii, 9. The Lord Jesus by the sudden out-flashing of his presence of glory from the sky will paralyze the Lawless One, “whose presence is *according to the energy of Satan with all power and signs and wonders of falsehood.*” (*Greek.*) Put side by side with it a passage descriptive of our Lord’s work. “Jesus the Nazarite, a man from God, accredited to you by *miracles, wonders, and signs*, which God did by him in the midst of you:” Acts ii, 22. Were those miracles of Christ wrought by God to accredit Him to Israel, literal and real? So shall the miracles of the false Christ, wrought by Satan to accredit his lie, be true? But if so, the Naturalistic Interpretation is false!

The contest between the true God on the one hand and Satan with his servants on the other, is to come over again. That of Egypt was decided by miracle.

This which is to come must be decided by the same weapons, the only ones appropriate to the occasion.

But, leaving these questions of detail, I will present the two great obstacles to the Naturalist theory, arising out of the Apocalypse itself.

1. The INTELLECTUAL OR STRUCTURAL impediment.

After our Lord has shown himself to John as the Son of man walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks, He says: (1) “WRITE THEREFORE THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN”—the vision of the stars and lamps in the first chapter.

(2.) “AND THE THINGS WHICH ARE,” the state of the seven churches, as described in the seven epistles to them: chap. ii, iii.

(3.) “AND THE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE AFTER THESE THINGS.” (*Greek*) i, 19. This takes up the prophetic part of the book, after the churches are dismissed: chap. iv—xxii.

This is an appropriate division of the book, given by our Lord Himself. It is confirmed by John’s opening words: “Who bore witness of (1) *the word of God*, (2) *and the testimony of Jesus Christ*, whatsoever things he saw:” i, 2.*

“The testimony of Jesus Christ,” considered as a part of this book, refers to chapters one, two, and three, in which our Lord Himself speaks. “The Word of God,” then, includes the rest of the book; and incidentally, by its Old Testament form of expression, it hints that in that prophetic portion we are come back to Old Testament principles and prophets. ‘The Word of God’ put singly may of itself be applied either to God’s oracles of the Old Testament, or of the New. But when another expression, as here, is added to indicate New Testament communications from our Lord Himself, ‘the Word of God’ then signifies truth of Old Testament order. See 1 Sam., ix, 27;

* Critical Editions omit the *τε*.

1 Kings, xii, 22 ; 1 Chron., xvii, 3. In the prophets see Isa. xl, 8.

"The things which thou sawest" are confined to chapter i. "*The things which ARE*," then, refer to the existing state on earth of the churches, which our Lord describes. But if so, there can be no '*history of the church*' in God's sense. While Christ recognizes the churches as His witness in heaven and on earth, *history as before God is at a stand*. It is "the things which ARE." It is a continuous NOW. It is the day of patience, and of mystery. The Lord is not treating the world as it deserves, because it is the acceptable year of *grace*. But the churches, as addressed by Christ, are seen to be failing more and more, and about to be removed in disgrace from their place of testimony for God, while yet individuals in them may be found faithful and rewarded.

Some have proposed to render instead of 'the things which are,'* '*what they signify*.' This is grammatically lawful, and would then mean 'Write about the stars and lamps, and *give their real and present signification in the actual state of the seven churches*.' This comes very nearly to the same sense as the other rendering, and equally overthrows the Historic Interpretation ; but it does not so well bring out the force of our Lord's third division of the book.

The third division of the Apocalypse gives us, "the things which are about to take place after these things." These words manifestly cut off all fulfilment of the

* Some have asserted that the seven churches are prophetic of seven successive states of Christendom, or parts of it. (1.) But the attempts to prove this have failed. What general state of the church has ever answered to Philadelphia? (2.) Christ was not speaking of national churches. How, when Jesus was near removing the candlestick from believers of Ephesus because they had left their first love, should He recognise as vessels of the light of heaven assemblies of men who had no life or love at all? National churches are daughters of the Harlot : Rev. xvii, 5.

prophetic part during the times of the church. Not till "the things which *are*" are come to an end, can the things which are to take place *after them*, begin. The force of these words has been lost to the English reader by the indefinite rendering "the things which shall be *hereafter*."

As long as the churches are recognized by God, so long is Jesus priest in the sanctuary above, and it is the time of grace. History, as referred to the Apocalypse, is the acting of the throne of chapter iv in its judgments. And that throne does not commence its action till the churches are set aside. 'Keep apart the time of the churches from the time of the *prophecy*,' is the principle legibly written on this arrangement of the Revelation. Only when the churches are removed from their post does prophecy in relation to the earth begin. The churches therefore are not seen after the last epistle of Christ in chapter iii. It is not, because 'the rapture of the church' takes place then ; for as soon as the throne of chapter iv is set, it is the day of *reward according to works*, and there are at least seven raptures supposed in the Book of Revelation.

The opening words of chapter iv are manifestly designed to point out to us where the third division of the book—announced in i, 19—is to be set. "*After these things* I saw, and behold a door was opened in the heaven, and the first voice which I heard as of a trumpet talking with me, said, 'Come up hither, and *I will show thee the things which must take place after these things*.' " The words "a door was opened in heaven" are a reference backward to ii, 25, the true reading of which is, "What ye have, hold fast *till I open*." The opening of heaven then to the ready ones of the church indicates, that the time assigned by Christ for the churches' testimony is over. Then takes place the first of the raptures. "*Come up hither*." "*Immediately I became in the spirit*, and behold a throne was being set in the heaven, and on the

throne was a sitter." John's place is altered thenceforward, and the whole scene changes from the outer sanctuary to the Holiest of heaven.

The church as one body never more appears. Neither the twenty-four elders, nor the four animals (*ζωα*) are symbols of the church. This should be proved by those who assert it. The elders give thanks for *creation*, not for *redemption* BY BLOOD. They are throned and crowned, before Christ appears on the scene.

—'But do they not say, "Thou hast redeemed *us* to God by thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation!"'

No! the word '*us*' is not genuine; as is proved, partly by its omission in two manuscripts and one version, partly by the judgment of critics, and partly by the reading which follows, a reading which is accepted by the critical editions. "Thou madest *them* to our God kings and priests, and *they* shall reign on the earth." In these words the elders give place to another body than themselves; whom they esteem more worthy to rule, because introduced by Christ the worthy One.

II. We consider next the MORAL barrier to the Naturalist or Historic Interpretation:

THE THRONE SET UP IN CHAPTER IV IS GOD'S THRONE OF JUSTICE.

This is proved by a variety of evidences. The *character* of the throne proves it. "*Out of the throne are coming forth lightnings and thunders and voices: and seven torches* of fire are burning before the throne*, which are the seven spirits of God:" verse 5. The throne resembles Mount Sinai in its terribleness, and in the fear it creates among the sons of men, as at the sixth seal. So the Holy Spirit is seen, not as the dove, but as "seven torches of fire

burning." By torches of fire, Samson ravaged the country of the Philistines. The Lord foretells that, Israel in the coming day shall be to the nations as "*a torch of fire* in a sheaf, and they shall *devour* all the people round about on the right hand and on the left:" Zech. xii, 6. The Holy Spirit here is represented not by "*tongues as of fire*," seated upon those accepted by God as His witnesses to Christ (Acts ii); but as torches, that *burn* those deserving of judgment.

(2) As soon as the throne appears, the elders glorify God as *worthy* to receive praise, because of His works in creation: verse 11. Next, a call is raised by the herald of the throne, that he who is *worthy* to open the sealed book, should present himself: chap. v, 2. None appears till the Lamb slain comes forward, and then the chiefs of heaven celebrate the superior worthiness of Christ. "Thou art *worthy*, for thou wast slain:" verse 9. The conquerors from among the churches "*shall walk with Christ in white: for they are WORTHY:*" iii, 4. And at length, under the bowls of wrath, God gives the murderers of His saints blood to drink, and the angel of the waters passes sentence on them: "*for they are worthy:*" xvi, 6. Seven times occurs the word. The throne, then, which deals with all according to works, is not the throne of *grace*.

(3.) The *actings* of the throne are *judgments on the earth*, which still increase in severity, till Christ comes forth in justice to *judge* and to *make war*: xix.

(4.) As soon as the throne of the Holiest in heaven is set, the scene entirely changes; the place, and appearance, and actings of Christ change. The title of God then becomes "*God of Hosts.*" And, as the objects of the throne's acting we have, not "*angels of churches*," but sea, earth, and "*kings of earth.*" At the bidding of the throne, horses of war go forth to carry the sword, famine, and pestilence and evil beasts, God's four sore judgments: Ezek. xiv. But

* Λαμπαδες. This is never 'lamps,' but rather 'torches.'

these are not enough. When the fifth seal opens, the martyrs inquire, Why God has not "*judged and avenged* their blood upon the dwellers on earth"? How is the appeal received? Is it replied, that such a call, addressed to a throne of *grace*, is unsuitable? Nay, it is owned that judgments shall come on the earth because of this: but the applicants must wait a little longer, until the inhabitants of earth of that day have proved, by their shedding anew the blood of God's servants, that they are of the same spirit as those of old. God then shakes the earth, and terrifies men by the commotion of the heavens and the earth. It is God's call, as once to Cain—"Where is Abel thy brother?" But in vain goes forth the appeal. Persecution is resumed, after the first shock of fear is over; and then the elements are stricken, and through them men die. They repent not, and then woe-trumpets affect directly the *persons* of men; they are tormented, till death is sought rather than life; they are decimated, till a third of men is cut off. But still there is no repentance; but idolatry and its cognate sins rule the sons of men.

The Apocalypse testifies in many places to the prophetic part as being 'the day of judgment.' The cry of the martyrs for judgment is answered by the vials, as the angel of the waters says: xvi, 5. At the seventh trump the elders on high say: "Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou should'st give *the reward* to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest *destroy* them that destroy the earth:" xi, 18. Christ comes to execute judgment on men and on Satan: xix, 11; xx, 11, 13. "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for *the hour of His judgment is come*," is the cry after Antichrist has appeared: xiv, 7.

In Rev. xvii, we are shown the *judgment* of the Harlot, after her day of grace is over. Her actings during

the past day of mercy to the injury of both kings and nations, are stated in verse 2. And just when the crushing blow falls on her, she is upheld by one possessed of all earth's power; she is full of riches, and decked with all the world's glory, while her iniquities are come to the full, and she is drunken with blood of the saints. At her fall, praise to God ascends from all the servants of God. All this tells of another dispensation of wrath, the contrast to the present one of grace.

Then comes the time of the saints executing judgment: Rev. xx. To do so now were self-exaltation *out* of due time. And he who exalts himself now shall be abased in the day of the kingdom.

Moreover, prophecy declares that God is about to set up His throne for judgment: Psal. ix, 7, 8; Isa. xxiv, xxxiv. And as the promise is from the Old Testament, the interpretation is to be Old Testament too; and the Israel which appears before the throne is literal Israel. Observe the contrast even in the Apocalypse, while the churches are recognised of God. There we find saints without any self-defence imprisoned and slaughtered by the devil (ii, 10), but there is no call for vengeance. Antipas is slain fast by Satan's throne, and Christ commends the martyr; but no threat is uttered against Satan, or his accomplices of mankind.

Let us now look a little more particularly at two of the messengers of the throne—usually called THE TWO WITNESSES. These, it is assumed, are Protestant ministers of the Gospel. While such interpretation is allowed, it is no wonder that the Apocalypse is 'a sealed book.' Is then the spirit of the Two Witnesses towards their persecutors that of the Gospel? "*If any wishes to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any wishes to hurt them, he must in this manner be killed:*" xi, 5. The commands of Christ under the Gospel are just the contrast to this. "I say unto you, *Love your enemies*, bless them that curse you, do

good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you : " Matt. v, 44. Conduct like that of the two prophets is suited to the Old Testament and the law of Moses : but it is in direct opposition to the Gospel.

Look again : " These (two prophets) have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : and they have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will : " verse 6.

Now have Protestant ministers such supernatural power as this ? Might they use it, even if they had it ? Would they *desire* to use it, if they possessed it ? Is the difficulty overcome, if you say, that the heaven which the Protestant ministers shut from rain is the *spiritual heaven* ? Do Protestant ministers shut the spiritual heaven, in order that the Spirit's grace may not descend on earth, all the 1260 days or 1260 years of their ministry ?

These Two Witnesses resemble greatly, in their history, the Lord Jesus Christ—the true and faithful Witness. For they are slain by crucifixion at Jerusalem, as our (their) Lord was.* " Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which is being called *spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord also was crucified.* " " For it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. " They lie under death three days and a-half ; but unlike their Lord, burial is refused them. At the close of the half-week, when corruption has seized them, they are raised to life in the sight of their foes, and like their Lord, they ascend to heaven in a cloud ; only that their ascent is seen, not by friends, but by foes. Then follows earthquake : even as earthquake attended on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. But very marked is the ensuing difference. While the earthquakes attendant on the Saviour's death

* ' Their Lord ' is the true reading.

and resurrection rent the rocks, they did not, as far as we are told, cast down one house of Jerusalem, or slay one of its inhabitants. But when these prophets of the throne of justice ascend : " The same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain seven thousand men of name [' names of men ' , margin], and the remnant were affrighted and gave glory to the God of the heaven. " Here, then, they not only avenge themselves, but God avenges them. Just two are left alive of Old Testament times—Enoch and Elijah. These then are the Two Witnesses. And the close of Old Testament prophecy promises the second mission of Elijah : Mal. iv.

The miracles of our Lord in the day of mercy were in entire contrast to theirs. Jesus turned waters, not into *blood*, but into *wine* ; in place of smiting His murderous foes, He hid Himself ; He stilled the wrecking storm ; instead of sending plagues, He cured many of their infirmities and plagues.

The Two Witnesses in their spirit, miracles, and locality, belong to the Old Testament. But in their death, resurrection, and ascent to heaven after death, there is the New Testament element. For since the day of Enoch and Elias, God has shown Himself as the God of resurrection.

The Two Witnesses is a critical test of any system of interpretation of the Apocalypse. None but the true view can be made to square with God's account of them. Here the Naturalist Interpretation conspicuously fails. What is the death of the Witnesses ? *Political death !* What their resurrection ? Return to *political life !* What their ascent to heaven in the cloud ? (leaving their foes on earth.) Their *political elevation !* With such keys, no wonder that the Apocalypse is a closed, sealed book ! *Are Christians then to seek political elevation ? Is it the hope of their calling to win a peerage ?* If so, how strangely Paul mistook

his way! Here, then, is a false moral principle, which can only pass current among those who own not the Christian's heavenly calling.

ANTICHRIST.

Very critical, in regard of this question, are our views of THE ANTICHRIST, THE WILD BEAST (*θηριον*), and THE MAN OF SIN. The Naturalist Interpretation asserts, that the Popes are now fulfilling, or have fulfilled, the prophecies concerning this deceiver. The Supernaturalist maintains, that they are not either the Antichrist, the Wild Beast, or the Man of Sin.

Here are some of the proofs. John, who alone uses the word 'Antichrist,' declares that the Antichrist will *deny the Father and the Son*: 1 John ii, 22. The Popes on the contrary, holding and teaching the three creeds, assert the Godhead of the Father and the Son. The spirit of Antichrist was to be known by *denying that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh* (*εληλυθοτα*), denying too that He *would come again in the flesh* (*ερχομενον*): 2 John 7. Now the Popes in the authorized standards of the Romish church, assert, that Jesus came once in the flesh, and will in it come again to judge. The Popes therefore are not the Antichrist.

But are not the Popes '*the Man of Sin*'? 2 Thess. ii. By no means! We shall have to go more deeply into this phase of the question. First, it is a mistake to say, that the Thessalonians '*wrongly anticipated the immediate advent of Christ*.' Nay, Paul glories in their constant expectation of the coming of Christ, no antecedent condition of His return being named. From them sounded out the word of the Lord, and the story went forth without any statement on Paul's part, "how they turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and *to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus*:" i, 10. What really troubled them was, the assertion derived from three accordant sources—but

all of them false—that the *great and terrible "day of the Lord had set in!"** What is "the day of the Lord"? The day when the Lord's anger will be poured out in *vengeance* on the sin of man come to its height. Those living in that day are called to *howl* at the destruction coming from the Almighty, and to *hide* them from His majesty, when He arises to destroy the works of man, and to shake terribly the earth: Isa. ii, iii; Joel i, ii; Zeph. i; Zech. xiv; Jer. xlv; Ezek. xxx.

Paul does not deny the terrors of the coming day of woe, but he comforts them by the implied promise, that *before* the day bursts in wrath on the world, the Lord would come to gather them out of it. "We beseech you, brethren, *by the coming* (presence) *of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him*, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled,"—*as if the great and dreadful day of vengeance had already begun*. The same thing appears in the former Epistle. He comforts the sorrowful Christians of Thessalonica with the tidings, that *the Lord Himself would descend from on high, and assemble together His own*, whether alive or under death, to His own *presence* in air. "Wherefore *comfort one another with these words*:" iv, 17, 18. Then he proceeds to tell them of "the *day of the Lord*." "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they shall say 'Peace and safety!' then *sudden destruction cometh upon them*, as travail upon a woman with child; and *they shall not escape!* But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that *that day should overtake you as a thief*." So the day is a day of *sudden destruction* on the world; but not to

* That the true reading is "Day of *the Lord*" in 2 Thess. ii, 2, will, I suppose, be admitted. And *ερεστηκεν* refers to something already begun, and about to last some time: Rom. viii, 38; 1 Cor. iii, 22; vii, 26. So we say, 'Winter has set in.'

come on *believers*, if they be watchful. *The presence of Christ* for the comfort of *His people*, in this Epistle, as in the second, *precedes* the destruction of unbelievers in the day of the Lord. So in Matt. xxiv, 37—42. I agree, then, with Mr. Guinness that while some of the church will be caught away to heaven, others will be left on earth during the great day.*

No event is given as necessary to precede *the coming of Christ to His people*. But two things above, and three below, go before *the great day of wrath and vengeance* on the world. There must be (1) Jesus' descent into air; (2) the ascent of His watchful ones to Himself; (3) the removal of the Hinderers (ver. 6, 7); (4) the Apostacy; and (5) the revelation of the Man of Sin.

What is "the Apostacy"? (*ἡ ἀποστασία*), ver. 3. The Historic Interpretation assumes, that it is 'corruption of the truth,' such as has been wrought by the Church of Rome. But this is not the sense. The covert corruption of the truth by Rome, and resistance to parts of the truth even by believers, are going on still during the day of mercy. Paul says, "*The mystery of lawlessness is already at work*:" 7. But 'the apostacy,' or open outbreak of lawlessness in word and deed, has yet to come. Liddell and Scott in their Lexicon say, that the Greek word means "Defection, *revolt*." Its cognate verb signifies, "To stand off, away, or aloof from, keep far from." It supposes an interval willingly made, generally between things previously connected. Thus, applied to subjects of a king, it tells of their revolt from their previous ruler. A word from the same root describes the legal instrument whereby husband and wife were separated. Applied to a religion, it signifies the entire abandonment of it by those who once professed it. (Those who wish to see

* See my tract, *Unwatchful believers of the Church left to the Great Tribulation*.

Greek passages in which its sense appears, can consult a collection I have made of them in—*The Popes not the Man of Sin*: pp. 95—108.) Hence the usual preposition adjoined with it is, 'from.' At Jerusalem Paul learns, that it was believed—not that he added fresh commands to those of Moses—but that he taught all "the Jews which were among the Gentiles to forsake (apostatize from) Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after the customs:" Acts xxi, 21. See also Luke ii, 37; iv, 13; xiii, 27.

After the throwing off of the Christian religion and name altogether (which only took place a brief space in France at the first French Revolution) comes "the revelation of the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition." The Naturalist Interpretation speaks of 'the *development* of the Man of Sin;'—the Scripture never so speaks. It speaks of him as one existing in Paul's day, now concealed, then to be revealed. He is to be above all other men in his impiety, as he will be in his just condemnation. For a thousand years before Satan is cast into 'the lake of fire,' this 'Son of Perdition' is tormented there: Rev. xix, 20; xx, 10.

Wherein consists his peculiar sin? "He opposes himself to, and exalts himself above, every (being) named God, or object of worship." Do the Popes do so? The contrary is notorious. Far from opposing themselves to the worship of Mary, they seek to promote it in every way. They present to the adoration of 'the pious' new objects of worship by canonization. They do not elevate themselves above every God as sole possessors of the divine nature. They could not do so, and be Popes. *This monster of evil* will deny and defy even God, seating himself in the temple of the true God at Jerusalem,* as triumphing over Him.

* 'But there is no such temple at Jerusalem now!' Cannot that which has been more than once pulled down and rebuilt, be rebuilt again?

'If Jehovah be the true God as He boasts, let Him strike me down, while I seat myself on His pretended throne!' Now the Popes never took or could take such a position. They profess themselves to be '*servants of the servants of God.*' They derive, as they affirm, all their power from Jesus Christ, through one of His apostles. They are '*vicars of Christ,*' '*successors of Peter.*'

Here is one conspicuous failure of the Naturalist Interpretation. Mr. Guinness can say of the Popes only—'*He was to be an opposer of Christ and His laws!*' p. 165. Does that any way answer to the description of this super-eminent Man of Sin? The Scripture says—"He is to *oppose himself to, and exalt himself above, every (being) called God, and every object of worship.*" Have not multitudes '*opposed Christ and His laws*' already? Did not the infidels of France, when their cry was—'Crush the wretch!' This man is to proclaim himself the only, the supreme God, and to forbid worship to any but himself. Here, and here alone, is his super-eminent sin!

Such an awful being could not present himself during the time of mercy. For God has set on earth two Hinderers during whose presence he cannot appear: ver. 6, 7. 'Who are the Hinderers?' The Naturalist Interpretation says—'The Roman emperors. Writers of the early church affirmed this.' But early and unanimous tradition also asserted the Man of Sin to be an *individual*, and not a series. Did then the Roman emperors hinder the elevation of the Popes to their lofty pretensions? As far from it as possible! The rise of the Popes dates from concessions and gifts bestowed on them by Roman emperors! Constantine is quoted as giving the Popes the name of God! Theodosius seems to have constituted the Bishops of Rome, judges of the Christian faith. In A.D. 445, the emperors Valentinian III., and Theodosius II., desig-

nated the Pope, director of universal Christendom. "From this time" says Ranke (*History of the Popes*), after reference to Valentinian's decree, "*the power of the Roman bishops grew up under protection of the Roman emperor himself.*" Justinian's decree, A.D. 533, is fixed on by Elliott, as *the beginning of the 1260 years of the Popes' reign!* About seventy years after, the emperor Phocas confirmed the pretensions of the Popes to be Head of all churches! *Strange hinderers they!*

The real Hinderer (*ὁ κατεχων*) is the Holy Spirit, and the true hindrance (*το κατεχον*) is that body of Christ—the church, which is the Holy Spirit's work. This is confirmed both by the apostle's previous Epistle, and by this. In the fourth chapter of the First Epistle, we see the removal of the church taking place before the day of wrath. And in this chapter, saints are to be assembled to Christ before the abandonment of Christianity (the apostacy) takes place: ver. 1. After the two Hinderers are removed, the field is clear to throw off the very name of Christ. That, then, is the suited time for the Lawless One to make his appearance; because it is the time of lawlessness in word and deed. He reigns, till Christ, who has mantled Himself in clouds, suddenly throws off the covering, and appears in the sky with His saints and the armies of heaven. That sight (*ἡ ἐπιφανεια της παρουσιας*) strikes the usurper and blasphemer dumb, and then the breath of Christ's lips in wrath consumes him. But till then his presence among men is surrounded by power of every kind, and miracles, and prodigies of falsehood: ver. 9. (*Greek.*) Moreover, he uses all arts of deceit to win the world, and succeeds. God sends on the rejectors of His Son an energy of delusion, so that those who refuse God's truth receive 'the lie' of the devil with avidity and delight. And the issue is their assured and inevitable damnation: ver. 10—12.

Now, do these notices of the Man of Sin answer to

the Popes' history? No! For not one of them ever wrought a miracle. Nor is the religious system enforced by the Popes an unmitigated 'lie,' which whosoever receives abandons all the truth of Christ, and accepts a system wholly opposed thereto, involving certain damnation.

THE WILD BEASTS OF REV. XIII.

Who is the first Wild Beast? The Naturalist Interpretation asserts that it is the papal dynasty, or the Popes. Will this consist with the description given in Revelation? In chapter xvii a more detailed account is given of the Wild Beast. Here it is: "The Wild Beast which thou sawest was, and is not, and is *about to come up out of the bottomless pit, and to go into perdition*: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder (whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world), when they behold the Wild Beast, because he was, and is not, and shall be present:" * xvii, 8 (*Greek*). Critical Editions.

Again, the seven heads "are *seven kings*: the five have fallen, the one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space. And the Wild Beast which was, and is not, is both himself the eighth, and is one of the seven, and goeth into perdition:" 10, 11. Now Mr. Guinness confesses, in relation to another passage descriptive of the Antichrist, in which the word 'kings' occurs:—

"If the word 'king' here, *necessarily* signifies an individual monarch, the question is answered: the ten horns must be ten individual kings, and their cotemporary, the little horn, must be an individual also. If this be so the Futurists are right, for since we know 'the man of sin' is to be in existence at the coming of Christ; it follows, that his career is *future*,

* *Και παρῆσται* the true reading.

since an individual can live only the ordinary life of mortals. If, we say again, a 'king' must signify one man, and not a race of men, *then the whole Protestant system of interpretation is erroneous*:" * p. 167. (*m. i.*)

Then we say the word 'king,' in Rev. xvii, *must* signify an individual. (1) For first, every word is to be taken literally, unless absurdity follows; and here no absurdity results. (2) The passage in which the word occurs is one in *explanation of a mystery*; and of course it must be taken in its simple, ordinary sense. "Why didst thou marvel? *I will tell thee the mystery* of the woman, and of the wild beast that carrieth her, which hath *the seven heads*, and the ten horns." (3) The Wild Beast is the antagonist to the Lamb; and as the true Christ is an individual, so the rival-Christ, who fights against him, is an individual also. (4) The Wild Beast is one who has lived on earth once, ('he was'), and is no longer found on earth ('he is *not*'). As he died a wicked man, his soul is now in "the bottomless pit," unable to come out of it till his time arrives: Rev. xvii, 8. That is not true of 'a form of government.' (5) After his ascent out of the pit and his brief reign, "he goes into perdition."

* Mr Guinness adds—"If so, then the martyrs were mistaken in supposing the popes to be 'Antichrist.' And we reply, 'They were.' He says further, "Then moreover the event, which the church of the 19th century has to expect, is *not the speedy coming of Christ*, but, as the Futurists assert, the very same that the Thessalonians of the first century were directed to look for, *a prior advent and revelation of Antichrist*." This is a mistake. Most Futurists believe, that Christ may come at any moment: there is nothing to prevent his coming to-day. If believers are watchful they shall be caught away to the Lord Jesus, before even the apostacy takes place, and much more before the revelation of Antichrist: Rev iii, 10, 'Has no part then of the prophecy been fulfilled since the day when Paul wrote it?' No, the old spiritual landmarks still abide. Why? Because our days, through God's mercy, are a part of the day of grace, and of "the things which *are*."

"Son of perdition," says Paul. Now that does not apply to the abstraction, 'a form of government.' (6) The restoration of a previous 'form of government' would never cause the world so to wonder at the matter, that they worship the devil, because he gives his king all his power; and that they worship the Wild Beast, because he possesses that power: xiii, 3, 4. Nothing short of the death and resurrection of a *man* can account for this. (7) Moreover 'a form of government' cannot head all the kings of the earth as generalissimo in the battle against Christ coming in person: Rev. xix, 19. (8) Kings nowhere, and much less in an explanation, mean 'forms of government.'

It is not necessary to enter minutely into the various failures of the interpretation as tested by the thirteenth of Revelation. I will test the whole by the *IMAGE* and the *MARK* of the *Wild Beast*.

These are the *great practical points* of the prophetic part of the Apocalypse. Surely, if the truth lies with the Naturalists, we shall find them, here at least, of one mind. They are as far from it as well may be. Ask Interpreters of this school, What is 'the Image of the Wild Beast'? and you will get for reply, 'the Ecclesiastical Councils owned by Rome,' or 'the Inquisition,' or 'the Great Mendicant Orders of Monks,' and so on.

Enquire again—"What is the *Mark* of the Wild Beast?" and you will learn, that it is, (1) 'The profession of the faith of Rome,' or (2) 'The cross marked in oil on the forehead of those confirmed by the Church of Rome,' or (3) 'The use of the Latin language in the worship and discipline of Rome.' For 'Lateinos' makes 666.

Let us look then at what Scripture says about the *Image* and the *Mark*.

1. The image is made by men, at the suggestion of the second Wild Beast, in order to glorify the first Wild Beast, or Satan's king.

2. After men have made the statue, a spirit is put

into the idol, and it speaks, and demands the death of all who will not worship: Rev. xiii, 14, 15.

3. To worship the Wild Beast and his image, or to receive his mark, is inevitable damnation. They are two closely related parts of the same impious religious system, which sets aside the worship of Christ. God's indignation is so terrible against it, that a special warning against this act, and this devotion to the False Christ, is given. After taking the mark, or offering the worship, there is no repentance. During this life the worshippers have no rest, day or night; and after it, they shall be tormented, and the smoke of their torment go up for ever and ever: Rev. xiv, 9, 11.

4. Some are slain, because they refuse thus to mark themselves, and these are seen as a triumphant company raised from the dead, and are set before God in heaven as having refused the worship and the mark: Rev. xv, 2.

5. On the men who worship the image and possess the mark imprinted on forehead or hand, God sends in wrath a painful and noisome ulcer, at the first vial: xvi, 2. But the deluded ones do not repent, and turn to the true Christ; though their God is unable to deliver them from this plague. They only curse the God who sends it: 10, 11.

6. The men who have so devoted themselves to the False Christ, through the miracles which the False Prophet works in order to deceive them, are found in battle array against Christ at his coming, and slain: xix, 20, 21.

7. Lastly, those who refuse worship to the idol, and to devote themselves to the False Christ by means of the mark, live and reign with Christ the thousand years of bliss: xx, 4—6. The true Christ rewards the one class, and pours vengeance on the other.

Now, is there any absurdity in supposing the image a literal idol, and the mark a visible mark in the flesh? Did not Israel at Sinai offend by the material image of

a calf set up for worship? And as God of old set a visible mark on the flesh of his people, may not Satan in his day compel the lost thus to devote themselves visibly to a false god?

Here, then, the question is brought to a very simple issue. I address myself to Naturalist Interpreters: 'Brethren, you have learned that the *image* is the Popes, or something belonging to them; and that the *mark* is the cross in oil on the forehead, or something similar. Now why do you not carry out your duty? You have learned that *the use of the Latin language in worship is a damnation from which there is no escape*: Rev. xiv, 9—11. That on it God has sent in wrath a peculiar ulcer at the first vial. Why then do you not lift up your voice in loudest warning against entering this thickly-trodden path to perdition? Why not advertise men of the danger of teaching Latin to children, seeing it is the way to the fiercest hell? Why do you not tell the clergy, that the sign of the cross on the forehead in oil or water is the sign, not of salvation, but of damnation?'

It can only be, I suppose, because you do not believe your own interpretation! You dare not carry out your views to their legitimate Scripture-taught result. You know that no ulcer has visited, or now visits, those marked with the cross on the forehead, or as the consequence of using Latin in worship. That is, the whole interpretation when brought to a practical test, collapses, and is proved false!

Now what is the root of the error here? It is, that you have taken truths which belong to the coming day of wrath, and have applied them to the Gospel day of mercy. In this day they are false; neither the False Christ, the False Prophet, the Image, or the Mark have appeared.

Let me ask, then, *Does the church still exist, and is it owned by Christ?* (1) If it does, Satan is still in heaven, and has not been cast out from it. It is

still the throne of *grace*, and that bears with both Satan and his kingdom in patience, till the throne of justice is set. (2) If on the other hand, Satan has been cast out of heaven into earth, it is because the throne of grace is removed, and the churches are no longer owned of God. *Then, for Christians and ministers to be proclaiming that it is the day of grace, and that we are with boldness to draw near to the throne of grace, is falsehood! Look to it, brethren!*

Look at the course of events detailed in Rev. xii, xiii! The sun-clothed Woman, about to give birth to a son, is watched by the Dragon with a view to devour her Child as soon as born. For he is jealous of this child, because he is destined to wrest the sovereignty over the nations out of the hand of Satan: xii, 9; xx, 3. The mystic Child nevertheless is born, and caught up to God's throne. Thereon ensues war between the defenders of the Child, who introduce it to heaven and to God's throne—and the host of Satan who attempt to keep it out of heaven, where Satan and his angels have hitherto been allowed. The battle is lost, and Satan and his angels are cast by power out of heaven into earth. That is effected but "*a short time*" before Satan's incarceration in the bottomless pit. This ejection of the devil, then, cannot yet have taken place. For after it he has only 1260 days respite, and those persecuted by him have to endure only 1260 days' exile: xii, 14; xiii, 5. Make it years if you will, though that were no 'short time,' and then say, what event in fulfilment occurred in A.D. 619, which was the devil's ejection out of heaven into earth. Tell us too, what then was the birth and ascent of the Child? We learn from the words of joy in heaven over the ascended Child, that up to that ascent Satan was accusing Christians before God, and that this mystic Child is a company of conquerors through the atonement of Christ, and through their true testimony of word and life for Him: 10, 11. Has there

been any resurrection and ascent of any Christian martyrs to God, since Jesus went up? If not, Satan is not yet cast out of heaven. He will not deliver battle, save as a last resource, when his possessions are invaded, and his rule over the nations is imperilled by this rival sovereign.

If Satan is already cast out of heaven, the churches have ceased to exist. For it is one of the great characteristics of the Church's calling, to war against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and his wicked spirits in heaven: Eph. vi, 10—16. But if Satan and his angels are no longer in heaven, the spirit-fight above has ceased. Then has come joy to heaven, and to the victorious company who have conquered their foe, and dwell above; while woe has settled on the earth, more terrible than ever has befallen it, because of the devil's lost battle and his rage: ver. 13.

The result of that ejection is his bestirring himself to set up his kingdom of the 1260 days. He calls up out of the bottomless pit his King and his False Prophet. And then comes the last deadly struggle of Satan and man against God and His Christ.

(1) If Satan is *not* yet cast out of heaven, then the Child has not ascended, nor has the Woman fled into the wilderness, nor has either of the Wild Beasts appeared. It is still the day of grace, the throne of grace, and *all the Historic Interpretation of the prophetic part of Revelation is false.*

(2) If Satan was cast out of heaven at Christ's ascent, or at Constantine's edict, or at almost any other past date you may fix on, his time of power and earth's time of pre-eminent woe has not been "short." God has from that day set aside the churches as His witness; the throne of God's judgment has long been set, and it is sinful in ministers to proclaim that this, the day of chief sin on man's part, and of chief wrath on God's, is "the accepted time, and the day of salvation."

(3) Moreover, Satan's king, in reigning 1260 years, has reigned 260 years longer than God's Christ. Finally, Christ has not kept His watchful ones out of the temptation, as He promised: iii, 10.

In short, the Naturalist Interpretation sins against God's truth, in that it teaches over again in principle the very error which the Holy Spirit exposed in 2 Thess. ii.

That error, taught by the spirit of falsehood, was—that 'the day of grace was over, and the great and terrible day of the Lord's wrath had set in.'

But this error is taught by the Naturalist Interpretation. It declares, that 'the falling away' from the faith has come ages ago. The hindering emperors have long been removed. The Man of Sin has for ages been revealed. His image has been set up, his mark has been imprinted on men; and the vials of God's wrath on him and his worship have for ages been poured out.

O then, the great and terrible "Day of the Lord" has been oppressing on the world for ages; yet the results are neither great nor terrible! Some are even dreaming of a millennium begun. Multitudes of churches and pastors are declaring, that it is the day, not of *destruction*, but of *salvation*!

Turn which way you will, the Naturalist Interpretation fails. It cannot admit the numerous Scripture testimonies of miracles about to come, both from Satan, and from Christ. They would overturn its naturalism. Hence it is obliged to shuffle past the Witnesses, or to interpret them of natural political events. The Two Witnesses work miracles of judgment of several kinds: xi. 'O those are Christian ministers preaching the Gospel of peace, and doing no miracle!' They are slain, lie as corpses, in the street, and ascend, as did their Lord, in a cloud. That is only political elevation of Protestants to equality with Romanists in the world's good things! 'The child is

born, and caught up to God's throne.' That is only some other natural event. 'The two Wild Beasts work miracles, yea great ones.' That, too, is set aside as merely pretences of miracle. The three spirits of evil at the sixth vial (which has been long poured out), work miracles with a view to gather men to battle against Christ: xvi, 13, 14. Those, too, must be some other natural events.

How then does miracle come in at the close? What room is left it in any testimony given of God?

Six trumpets have been blown, yet none has heard the sound! The seventh, however, is to utter so terrific a blast, that all men are to hear it, and the dead to awake! Whence comes that surprising difference?

You as pre-millennialists accept the two resurrections of Rev. xx as literal and true ones. How can you? You have cut the ground from under your feet! If the Two Witnesses have not arisen, save by a figurative and political resurrection, how do you establish the literality of the resurrection of the martyrs and others in Rev. xx? If the ascent of the False Christ out of the bottomless pit is not really a resurrection, but only some secular change, how can you hold, as literal, the exit of souls of the dead from Hadees, to be judged before the Great White Throne? The infidel will not be slow to use against you the tools which you have been employing against miracles to come. If the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Two Witnesses be not real and literal, but only symbolic and political, confess that the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus was only something symbolic and political. From the effect of your interpretation I am sure you can contrive no real escape!

For according to the mind of God there are two DAYS of opposite principles. There is the *day of grace*, of patience, and mercy on God's part. This was foretold by Isaiah, as "*the acceptable year of the Lord*:" Isa. lxi, 2. Immediately after it comes, in the same

verse, "*the day of vengeance of our God*." Jesus insisted on the opening fulfilment of the first of these in His sermon at Nazareth; when full of the Spirit of God as the dove, He proclaimed the forgiveness of sins. The church is placed by God in this day of mercy to the world. "To you is *the word of this salvation* sent." "I have set thee (Jesus) to be a light of the world, that thou shouldest be *for salvation to the ends of the earth*:" Acts xiii, 26, 47. "*The salvation of God* is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it:" Acts xxviii, 28. The salutation of the epistles to the churches is, "*Grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ*." This stands in contrast to the day of *justice*, of *battle*, and of *destruction*, which is to follow after this Gospel Day. Of notices of that awful coming day, the prophets are full. "*The great day of the Lord is near. That day is a day of wrath, of trouble, and of distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land (earth) shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of them that dwell in the land (earth)*:" Zeph. i, 14—18. "Howl ye; for *the day of the Lord* is at hand; it shall come *as a destruction from the Almighty*. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, *the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay*

the land (earth) desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. *And I will punish the world for their evil,* and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible:" Isa. xiii, 6—11.

The New Testament is a witness of the same two days. "Despisest thou *the riches of his goodness* and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that *the goodness of God is leading thee to repentance?* But after (according to) thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest unto thyself *wrath against the day of wrath and of revelation of the righteous judgment of God*; who will render to every man according to his deeds:" Rom. ii, 4, 6. See also Rev. xi, 17, 18; and xv, xvi; 1 Thess. v, 1, 3.

The Church, as especially the product of God's grace in "the day of salvation," is to bear witness to the world of the goodness of God in the forgiveness of sins. "All that call on the name of the Lord Jesus are saved:" Acts ii, 21; Rom. x, 13. It has its standing of acceptance before God, because the throne whereto it draws nigh is "*the throne of grace*:" Heb. iv, 16. This dispenses *mercy and grace to help*. Moreover, the Holy Spirit has been sent down from heaven as "THE SPIRIT OF GRACE:" Heb. x, 29. Jesus, as our High Priest, maintains our standing before this throne, and "we have access by faith into this *grace* wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the (coming) glory of God:" Rom. v. Hence it is expected of the Lord, that the saved of the Church should testify to God's present grace by proclamation of mercy to the world. Also, that as they stand themselves in mercy, they should in their conduct to the world, and to their brethren, exhibit the spirit of mercy. The awful result of the

contrary conduct is shown in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant: Matt. xviii. Forgiven himself, he refuses to forgive his fellow-servant: whereupon his debt is thrown back upon his shoulders, and is exacted by his master.

As long, then, as the throne of grace stands, the churches of God, in spite of their failures, are recognized before God; and conversely, as long as the churches are recognized of God, the throne of grace is standing. Hence the Holy Spirit, by Paul, rebukes the contrary error, which had burst out among the Christians of Thessalonica. Among them the cry had sprung up (2 Thess., i, ii), 'The great and terrible day of the Lord's judgment has begun!'^{*} This error, which is in principle that of the Historic Naturalist Interpretation, and the terror among believers which it wrought, is rebuked by Paul in this way.

He beseeches them, in consideration of the Lord's descent from heaven, in order to gather to Himself the watchful ones of His church before the day of sin and woe sets in, not to be soon scared out of their senses, by apprehension of the real terrors of that day. *That day of judgment and wrath cannot come till the wickedness of the world has arrived to its height, and till nations have shaken off even the name of Christ* ('the falling away,' or 'apostacy'). At present, during the time of the Church, lawlessness is working in secret (v. 7), but there are two hindrances: (1) The Spirit of God, and (2) the Church of God, which is His work (v. 6, 7). But when the Spirit of God withdraws, and those who are watchful are caught away, then comes the world's darkest and most sinful period. For the disciples of Christ, until they have lost their savour, are the world's salt and light: Matt. v, 13—16. And so long:

^{*} The true reading and translation of 2 Thess. ii, 2, is—"As that the day of *the Lord has set in*."

as they are on earth, the great outburst of lawlessness in utter abandonment of Christianity cannot come, nor can the Lawless One, who is the heading up of the whole, make his appearance. When God's Christ and His saving truth have publicly been refused, then will come the open field for the False Christ; and his deadly energy will be backed by all Satan's power, and delusion from on high; and will enchain for perdition those who have rejected God's truth, to accept with all their heart the devil's lie.

If any in August should say—'The winter has set in'—it would be open to reply—'Winter cannot set in, till the harvest is reaped and stacked.' So may we answer any who should affirm that the present day is the day of wrath and woe—'It is not so; for none of the Lord's first-fruits or harvest have been reaped.' Now the Naturalist Interpretation asserts in principle this error, because it declares that God's time of highest wrath is now. For according to it, we are living under the *vials* of the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

The setting up of the throne of judgment in Rev. iv shows, that *the Church's* standing as before God *is ended*. The Church's testimony is—that '*it is now the day of grace*.' But if the throne of God be the *throne of judgment*, the day of justice has set in, and it is false to describe the day as the day of mercy. If it be not the day of mercy from God, disciples are not bound to suffer patiently the persecution of the wicked: Rev. ii, iii.

Which then of the two days is it now? Which of the two thrones of God is now set?

This is easily known by inquiring—'Is God recognizing any assemblies as His churches and children of His grace? Is the Gospel of God's grace being now rightly testified? Is it "now the accepted time, the day of salvation"? If so, the throne of judgment is

not set, nor the day of destruction begun, nor the prophetic part of Revelation begun.' Is this "the great and terrible Day of the Lord," when men are to howl and to hide themselves, because of the Lord's indignation? Isa. ii, xiii. Certainly not!

The setting up of the throne of judgment does not cause the whole Church to be at once wholly caught up to God, because not every believer is ready, or will be "accounted worthy to escape the things that are coming to pass:" Luke xxi, 36. But at once it sets the church aside from being God's witness of mercy on earth. It is disqualified thereby as a witness, morally and spiritually. And instead of *the church, Israel*, which is the witness of the *justice* of the Most High, steps into her place. The church as such is seen no more, neither directly, nor symbolically, after chapter iii. But those of God's worthies of Israel who are found on earth during the day of judgment are separated from the men who have to suffer because of sins: Rev. vii, 3.

Mr. Guinness' and other Naturalist Interpretations are full of confusion, because they own not the three great spheres in which God is working now: (1) "The Jews, (2) the Gentiles, and (3) the Church of God:" 1 Cor. x, 32.

The sixth Seal seems to give the visible limit of the day of Gospel mercy. This I gather from Peter's sermon at Pentecost. He quotes from Joel a promise of the outpouring of the prophetic spirit upon Israel's sons and daughters, and also upon God's servants and handmaids: Acts ii, 17. He then cites still further: "And I will show *wonders in the heaven above*, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awful day of the Lord come.*" This scene takes place at the sixth Seal; and men are terrified thereby: Rev. vi. But

note, there are *two* such obscurations of the sun and moon : one *before* the great and terrible day ; and the other "in those days, *after* that tribulation:" Mark xiii, 24 ; Matt. xxiv, 29. The one defined by Joel, and noted by Peter is to occur *before* the terrible day has come on the men of earth. Peter then adds—also from Joel—"And it shall come to pass, that *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" During these "last days" then, and *up to that wonder in the heavens*, all callers on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved. *After* that sign offered to the men of earth, the terrible day has begun. The kings of the earth and its inhabitants generally, as seen in the sixth Seal, are condemned. For they are not callers on the name of the Lord, nor saved. They are not reconciled to God through the Lamb, but fear His wrath; and they are left on earth to the judgments which follow: Rev. viii, ix. Hence too we are shown in the next chapter of Revelation, God's *two* peoples.

I. 'The callers on the name of the Lord' are shown us, an innumerable multitude out of all nations, who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and so are able, not only to stand before God, but even to be His kings and priests in the heavenly temple. They are "saved:" their salvation is complete in resurrection, and they are arrived at its place in heaven.

II. The first-fruits of God's other people ISRAEL, His people of the earth, are also shown us, in the 144,000 out of every one of the twelve tribes. They are left on the earth during the time of judgment, and hence they are to be distinguished by a visible mark from those on whom the plagues of God are to fall. The Great Multitude is the harvest of earth won during 'the day of grace,' and their assembly on high is a witness that, *that* day of mercy is over. *Their* day of great trouble lasted all through the dispensation of mercy. *Israel's* day of great trouble has still to begin. Says Jesus to the watchful of His church, "Because thou

hast kept the word of my patience, *I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation that is about to come on all the habitable earth to try the dwellers on the earth.*" Rev. iii, 10. Those caught up to the throne of God feel neither the temptations nor the woes that assail the earth.

With these truths before us, how can the Naturalist Interpretation assert, with any appearance of support from Scripture, that we are *living under the Vials*?

What! Is it *the day of God's wrath*? Is men's sin at its height? And are the fiercest of God's woes already poured out on men? Has the False Christ come? denying both the Father and the Son? denying that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh? * If he is come, what is his mark set upon his adherents?

How can God's wrath and man's sin be at their height if God is still owning the churches of Christ? How, if *wrath of God is come in its fulness*, are preachers asserting that it is the *Gospel day of grace*? If the vials are being poured out, the Most High is so wroth, that there is no entrance to Him, and no prayer can be accepted. The smoke of His indignation designedly keeps out all access to His presence: Rev. xv, 8. Or is Christ still the intercessory priest before the throne of grace? Is God now avenging the blood of the martyrs? Is He giving the men of earth blood to drink, because they have shed the blood of His saints? Is He scorching them with His sun? Is He tormenting the False Christ's worshippers with ulcers, whose pain is so severe that they bite their tongues through the agony? Are they cursing God because of it? Are miracles being wrought by evil spirits to gather men to fight against God and His Christ, under the

* Those who would see the fuller proofs, that the Popes are not the Man of Sin and the False Christ, are referred to my works—*The Popes not the Man of Sin*; and to my controversy with Mr. Nangle—*The Man of Sin, who is he?*

banners of the False Christ, and his great coadjutor, the False Prophet?

Here there can be no mistake! Neither physically nor spiritually are these things true! The churches of God are still owned. Christ is still the intercessory Priest; the Holy Spirit is still on earth. Therefore the False Christ is not come; and till he has come, his mark cannot be set on any. The Hinderers are both on earth. The church as salt, and light, prevents the sin and its consequent woe, which are here depicted. The first-fruits of the wheat-field are not yet cut or carried to the temple above.

III. Another objection, also fatal to the Naturalist, or Allegoric Interpretation is, that it throws Old Testament prophecy out of its place and use. Old Testament prophecy is engaged with the future of the *Jews*, their day of unbelief in their return to their own land; the extremity of their wickedness, and the awful judgments with which the Lord will visit them. But the Allegoric Interpretation sees in the twelve tribes of Israel only the Church (Rev. vii).

(1) Read the plague of *Locusts* (Rev. ix) as literal, and at once we see, that Joel foretells the same supernatural plague. But Joel cannot be made to square with the wars of the Saracens, and the history of Europe. Joel is occupied with *Israel*, the rebuilt *temple*, and its *sacrifices*: Joel ii, 15—17. And he promises upon Israel's repentance, the coming of the glorious millennial day. (2) Take literally the third trumpet, and the embittering of the waters of earth, and at once we see that the same thing is predicted in the prophets, as about to visit Israel: Jer. ix, 15; xxiii, 15; Isa. xxiv, 9. But the Naturalist Interpretation ignoring Israel, both in its past history and its future, throws the Church out of its place. 'Waters of gall' once troubled Israel, when led through the desert under Moses: Ex xv, 23—26. But on that occasion the Lord healed the bitter waters by the tree which He

showed to Moses. Here, in the day of wrath, the unhealed bitter waters kill many: Rev. viii, 11. In the day of *mercy*, Jesus turns *water* into *wine* literally. In the coming day of judgment on living men, water will be turned, first into *bitterness*, and then into *blood*: viii, 11; xvi, 4—7.

If the Revelation is a continuous history of 'the church' or Christendom, then it is to be interpreted by profane history, whose facts have fulfilled it; and as miracle has not stepped in since the day of the apostle John, the plagues of the Apocalypse cannot be supernaturally or literally taken, for if so taken they predict miracle. In short, we may say, that the Naturalist Interpretation has sprung out of *unbelief*. It refuses to own, that miracle is about continuously to interfere in judgment with the course of this present unbelieving world. How would John the apostle understand the turning of waters into gall, and into blood? How do we understand, 'the vinegar mingled with gall,' which was given to Jesus to drink? Psal. lxxix, 21, 22. And is it not written, that God in the day of justice will requite each according to his work?

If, then, the principle of Interpretation be the Allegoric, the Apocalypse in its plagues is non-miraculous, and its many judgments mean only wars. But if it really predicts miraculous plagues, it cannot have been fulfilled in the past, and can only be accomplished in the future. If its plagues be miraculous, sent from the throne of the justice of God, then they cannot have been fulfilled in the day of mercy, in which God has set 'the church.'

DANIEL.

The Book of Revelation has indeed its correspondences, as Mr. Guinness believes, with Daniel. But Daniel is occupied with the fortunes of *Israel*, and the Allegoric Interpretation practically ignores Israel.

Daniel is a sealed book until the time of the end. The Apocalypse on the contrary, is by God's express command, *not* sealed.

The Apocalypse foretells the day of trouble as it affects men in general. Daniel foretells the same day of great trouble, as it affects Israel. If the Naturalist Interpretation be the true, the day of greatest trouble is almost past, and the Jews are not stricken by it. The Book of Daniel foretells the day of woe, as affecting Jerusalem, the temple at Jerusalem, and its sacrifices: Dan. viii, 9—14; ix, 24—27. The Apocalypse instructs us also concerning the woes about to fall on Jerusalem and its temple during "the times of the Gentiles," or the forty-two months.* The Allegoric Interpretation supposes all to be fulfilled without reference to Jerusalem or to its temple; which temple has no existence during the times of the church. If Daniel be in close correspondence with Revelation, it is because the prophetic parts of the Apocalypse and of Daniel treat of Israel. But if the Israel of the Apocalypse be the literal Israel, the interpreting it of the church is unlawful.

Shall I glance at the correspondence between Daniel and the Apocalypse?

1. In the second chapter of Daniel we have the coming kingdom of glory putting down the kingdoms of earth: chap. ii.

2. The third chapter runs parallel with the prophecy of the Great Image, its worshippers on the one hand, and its refusers on the other: Rev. xiii—xvi.

3. In chapter four we have the Wild-Beast-king, and his restoration on repentance. In Rev. xiii we have the blaspheming Wild-Beast-king (*θηριον*). But he is not restored, for he does not repent.

* "The times of the Gentiles," are frequently taken to signify the times since Israel's casting off. But this is not proved. That the phrase may refer to Rev. xi, 2, and be future in its application, is evident on its face.

4. In the fifth of Daniel we see the Lawless One struck powerless, when his sin is come to the full. This is foretold in direct prophecy by Paul in 2 Thess. ii, and by John in Rev. xix.

5. In the sixth of Daniel the penalty of prayer to the true God is death by the wild beasts. In Rev. xiii the service of the true God exposes to death by the two mystic Wild Beasts of Rev. xiii.

6. The seventh of Daniel sets before us the four empires of earth, as seen by the enlightened eye of the prophet. The last king of the fourth empire is beheld impiously rising in blasphemy against God, and in murder against His people, till he is put down by Christ's appearing in person, and by His bestowing the kingdom on His saints. This answers to Rev. xix, xx.

7. The Little Horn of Daniel viii is either the False Christ or the False Prophet of Rev. xiii.

8. The ninth of Daniel gives the prophet's prayer for Jerusalem and its temple, and the answer of the Most High. The false Messiah is slain. He breaks his covenant in the half-week. This is in close contact with Rev. xiii, 3, and xi, 7—19.

The three last chapters of Daniel give us the Great False Christ, the Jewish apostates who go over to him, the cutting off of both, and the resurrection. This is in close agreement with Israel's attitude in Revelation, and with the bliss which follows on the destruction of the False Christ.

PROPHECY ON OLIVET. MATT. xxiii—xxv.

But the Saviour's prophecy on Olivet is in yet nearer parallelism with Revelation: Matt. xxiii—xxv. Both treat of the Saviour's personal return, and of the events intermediate between His departure and return. In it the Jews, Jerusalem, and the temple are prominent.

The Saviour foretells that *prophets* are again to be sent to Israel, and to Jerusalem, and that some of these will be *crucified*, as He was: Matt. xxiii, 29—36. The same thing, if taken literally, is foretold of the Two PROPHETS of Rev. xi. When that has taken place, our Lord affirms, that vengeance for the blood of all the holy martyrs of former days will be exacted of the men of that day. In full agreement with this are the fifth seal, the vengeance of the earthquake that follows on the ascension of the two prophet-witnesses, and the outpouring of the vials of wrath in Revelation xvi.

Jerusalem shall be the especial centre of the vengeance, because it has been ever the city that slays the messengers of God. This was foretold by our Lord on several occasions; in the parable of the *Wicked Husbandmen*, in that of the *Wedding Garment*, and in the close of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. In the *Wedding Garment*, our present day of God's patience appears as the time of sending messengers to gather in guests, who shall fill up the places of the refusers of the king's feast. Till the guests are complete, the feast cannot begin. Nor does the king come in to view the guests and to cast out the unfit, till that work is over: Matt. xxii, 10, 11. Here we have the same distinction between the day of present mercy, and the day of future justice, which has been so much insisted on as fundamental.

Will the reader just follow with his eye in the Gospel of Matthew, the scenes which Christ presents after the parable of the Wedding Garment? The Pharisees are left during the time of God's mercy, to pay their dues to God, and to Cæsar; while the Saviour pays the dues of His disciples: Matt. xxii, 15—22; xvii, 24—27.

Resurrection shall come to pass by the power of God, and according to His declarations, in spite of the unbelief of men, and the alleged absurdities and impossibilities which encumber it: Matt. xxii, 23—32. It

was God's counsel from the first, as His promises to the patriarchs bear witness. For the promises of the enjoyment of the land of Palestine cannot be fulfilled to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while they are naked spirits tarrying in the place of the dead.

Jesus must reign as the Christ, not only awhile as the Son of David, but eternally too as also the Son of God. It is in His quality as Son of *man* and Son of God, that He takes the kingdom in millennial days: Rev. xx, 4—6; Matt. xxii, 41—46.

In our Lord's farewell discourse, the Jews, the temple, and Jerusalem, are the prominent objects of prophecy. So, then, Israel in the Apocalypse is the literal Israel, as truly as Jesus in prophecy is the literal Jesus who is coming to reign.

While the Roman destruction of Jerusalem has given a sketch of what shall come to pass in days yet future, it has not fulfilled much of what our Lord then predicted. (1) No prophets were then crucified at Jerusalem: Matt. xxiii, 34. (2) Vengeance therefore for the martyrs' blood is yet future: 35. (3) The Gospel of the kingdom had not then been proclaimed, nor has it been up to this day proclaimed in *all the world*: xxiv, 14. What is now preached by missionaries is "the Gospel of the *grace* of God,"* or the good news of Jesus slain and risen, and the pardon of sin during the day of mercy. What has yet to be proclaimed by Jewish missionaries to all nations is the good news of *Christ's coming personally to reign over Israel and the world*, and to put down iniquity by justice. (4) The prophecy concerning the "abomination" (idol) that makes desolate has never yet been fulfilled, for the lifting up of that on the temple is to be the sign to our Lord's Israelite disciples for instant and headlong flight: xxiv, 15—20. But

* Acts xx, 24.

when the Romans advanced their eagles to the temple gate and sacrificed to them, flight was impossible ; the city was taken. Nor were there any Christians to fly from the city. They had all escaped to Pella, ere those dismal days.

(5) The Roman destruction of Jerusalem was not the day of greatest trouble ever to be. *That* cannot come till the *sin of man* at its height has roused the *wrath of God* to its height. Nor, if every soul that fought at Jerusalem under Titus had been cut off, would it be true, that no "flesh would be saved."

(6) *Nor were there then any false Christs and false prophets, showing any sign or wonder, much less great signs and wonders.* Nor in that day were there any elect to be deceived by them in Jerusalem. (7) Nor after the day of that great trouble were the heavenly bodies stricken (ver. 29). (8) Much less did Jesus then appear in the clouds (ver. 30). Nor did He then gather to Him His Jewish elect, with sound of trumpet (ver. 31). Confer Deut. xxx, 1—7 ; Isa. lxxv, 9, 22.

OMISSIONS OF MR. GUINNESS.

What then has the Literal Interpretation to allege in its behalf? Mr. Guinness has not done his opponents justice ; very far from it. He has masked the great, the insuperable difficulties which weigh against his own side. He takes up in detail only part of the xviith chapter of Revelation, insisting that the city there is Rome. And that is granted. But then he confounds *the Wild Beast* that first carries the Woman, and then next with his ten kings rends and burns her, with *the Woman* that is destroyed. The Babylon of Rev. xvii is Babylon *the mystery* ; but the Babylon of Rev. xviii is Babylon *literal*. In chapter

seventeen we have 'waters,' and 'heads,' and 'horns,' and so on ; all mystic, as the angel declares. But in the next chapter all is literal. There are *two* destructions of Babylon. First comes the burning of *Babylon mystic* by the False Christ and his ten kings. But after desolation has thus settled on *Rome* (Rev. xviii, 1—3) there is yet a *future* and sudden destruction of Babylon predicted. The first came from the hand of *men*, the second comes upon the ancient city of Euphrates from the hand of *God*. In an instant, by the last and most terrible earthquake, it sinks into the abyss below, like a mill-stone falling into the sea-depths and never after is to be seen : while the smoke from the earth's burning interior mounts up before God through the yawning gulf, which its descent has left : Rev. xviii, 21 ; xix, 3.

EVIDENCES OF THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION.

The Literal Scheme can allege in its favor the great truth that PROPHECY, WHEN GOD DECLARES IT TO BE FULFILLED, HAS BEEN FULFILLED LITERALLY. This is our tower of strength. Look at the prophecies declared by the Holy Spirit in Matthew to be fulfilled ! Jesus' birth of a virgin, His place of birth, His calling out of Egypt, His place of residence, His cure of diseases, His utterance of parables, His entry into Jerusalem on the ass and its foal, His valuation at thirty pieces of silver, the vinegar at the cross, and the parting of His garments. How were these accomplished ? Literally ! So then, we say, will the prophecies be fulfilled, which have, as yet, not received their accomplishment. And if so, then the plagues of Revelation are miraculous. And if miraculous, they are yet future, and the Allegorical Interpretation is overturned. Thus the plagues on Egypt under unbelieving Pharaoh were

types of what are yet to take effect on Israel and the world. The waters of the earth are one day to be turned into blood. Well, this was literally accomplished of old, when judgment came on murderous Egypt by the hands of Moses. Boils were sent on refractory Pharaoh and his people ; and emerods on unbelieving Philistines, who carried Jehovah's ark in triumph to their idols' temples. O then, when like circumstances and like times arise, as foretold in the Apocalypse, literal sores and ulcers shall avenge God's cause against the False Christ. The hail of judgment on Egypt and on the Canaanites was literal. So then, shall the hail of the Apocalypse be literal also. For Jerusalem, says the Holy Spirit, is by spiritual men seen to occupy the place of Sodom and Egypt : Rev. xi, 8. Did literal darkness invade Egypt in the day of God's wrath ? So shall it again overtake men in the greater and more terrible day, when the sin of men and the indignation of God are at the full.

WHAT, AGAIN, HAS THE APOCALYPSE ITSELF TO SAY ON THIS HEAD ?

1. First comes the designation of the book, given by our Lord Himself. It is "THE REVELATION of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto His servants what must shortly come to pass." Now 'Apocalypse' in Greek, and 'Revelatio' in Latin, both mean '*The taking off of a veil*.' The future is by nature veiled to us. The Apocalypse is the taking off of that veil. But if so, it must be literally taken, wherever absurdity does not follow. And he who affirms absurdity must prove it, and define its character, as moral or metaphysical. Absurdity is disproved, wherever in the past any like action of God or Christ has been testified in Scripture. Some loudly assert the absurdity of the coming of Christ and his armies on white horses. This is silenced by pointing them to Jesus' literal entry into Jerusalem on an ass, as foretold by Zechariah.

Some assert the absurdity of the binding and imprisonment of Satan. These are silenced by pointing them to God's imprisonment of 'angels' or 'spirits,' testified by Peter and Jude : 2 Pet. ii, 4 ; Jude 6, 7.

Now, if the Revelation is allegorical and is to be interpreted on that theory, it is a *veiled* book, it is *sealed* ; while God declares it is *not* : Rev. xxii. Seals were on it, but Christ has prevailed to take them off. But *allegory* is a *veiling*. This is certain from examples of profane history, and from Scripture. Herodotus gives us a specimen of symbolic language, and of its difficulty of interpretation.

"At last Darius was in a great strait, and the kings of the Scythians having ascertained this, sent a herald, bearing as gifts to Darius, a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows. The Persians asked the bearer of the gifts *the meaning of this present* ; but he answered, that he had no other orders than to deliver them and return immediately, and he advised the Persians, if they were wise, to *discover what the gifts meant*. The Persians having heard this, consulted together. Darius' opinion was, that the Scythians meant to give themselves up to him, as well as earth and water ; forming his *conjecture* thus : since a mouse is bred in the earth and subsists on the same food as a man ; a frog lives in the water ; a bird is very like a horse ; and the arrows they deliver up as their whole strength. This was the opinion given by Darius. But the opinion of Gobryas, one of the seven who had deposed the magus, did not coincide with this. He *conjectured* that the presents intimated : 'Unless O Persians ye become birds and fly into the air, or become mice and hide yourselves beneath the earth, or become frogs and leap into the lakes, ye shall never return home again, but be stricken by these arrows.' And thus the other Persians interpreted the gifts : " Book iv, 132.

In more modern days, in the perilous times of

Charles the I. or Charles the II., a gentleman sent by his servant to his friend a pair of spurs and a crown piece in silver. He dared not write, lest his letter should be intercepted, and its direct words should implicate himself. He endeavoured to conceal his meaning from the servant who bore his missive, and from all but his friend. And so it fared. All others saw in it only a probable repayment of a loan. But he who saw beneath the veil, beheld in it a warning to fly, and acted thereon.

Again, if it were granted that the plagues of the Apocalypse were symbolic, *the resulting states of men are literal*, if there be any literality in the book. The plagues up to a certain point, are designed to produce repentance; and at the close of the second woe-trumpet we learn, that they prove ineffectual to that end; and then is given a literal list of the sins of men, from which it was intended thus forcibly to turn them.

But it is certain, that such states of feeling and action among men as the Apocalypse describes never have yet been produced, or could be, save by such supernatural plagues. "*And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them:*" ix, 6. Now has such a feeling ever visited mankind, as the result of any natural or political calamities? But this will certainly be the feeling, whenever men shall be tormented every day as with the sting of a scorpion. For extreme pain makes life undesirable. Thus, then, the one side of the equation necessitates the other.

Was there ever a symbolic political earthquake, destroying seven thousand men of name, that caused the residue to be frightened, and to give glory to the God of the heaven? This result is quite comprehensible, as the result of a terrific literal earthquake, engulfing and burying seven millions of men. Have mankind ever as yet broken out into blasphemy against God?

Never, as the result of natural, or political causes. But as the consequence of ulcers of frightful pain and noisomeness sent, it is easily understood: xvi, 10, 11.

The Apocalypse, then, is not allegorical; for if it be, it is no taking off a veil, it is the putting on of one. Men and God are at variance about this book. Men will not believe that it is God's taking off a veil. They assume that it is enigma, and several are the books beside Mr. Guinness' which profess to explain the Revelation, and call it—'The *unveiling* of the Apocalypse.' This is then to imply against God's own assertion, that Revelation is a *veiled*, and not, as God says, an *unveiled* book. If it is *veiled*, it is not a Revelation. If it is a Revelation, it is *not* veiled, it is the taking off a veil. If sealed, it is no Revelation. If a Revelation, it is not sealed. If it be a Revelation it is to be literally taken; it is no series of enigmas, to be guessed at by the learned. Moses veiled his face when he wished it to be hid. That veil is by Paul put in opposition to plain and direct speech: 2 Cor. iii, 12—14. The veil which was on Moses is taken off in Christ. Revealed things are the opposite to those kept secret: Deut. xxix, 29; Dan. ii, 19, 47; Matt. xi, 25—27. No wonder those cannot understand the Apocalypse who maintain, that God has in it put on a veil, when the Lord says it is the taking off of one!

But Mr. Guinness alleges, as proving the contrary, the expression found in the first verse of the first chapter of Revelation. "He sent and *signified* it by His angel to His servant John" (*εσημηνε*). 'Here,' says Mr. Guinness, 'the sacred writer affirms, that the book is given in enigmatic language, by signs.'

Does the word used then affirm his view? It does not. (1) It is used in the New Testament where there were no appeals to the eye, but to the ear alone. Such

were John xii, 32, 33. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying [by words] what death he should die:" xviii, 32. "This spake he signifying [by words] what death he (Peter) should die:" xxi, 19.

But I grant, that the representation to John in the Apocalypse was made to his eye (*οσα ειδε*). Does not that prove Mr. Guinness' idea? By no means! Because representation to the eye may be either (1) *direct and literal* or (2) *emblematic*. The glass of an enchanter might present to his querist the scene exactly as it shall be fulfilled. Or it might be presented emblematically, as in the celebrated dramatic representation offered to Charles the V. and his courtiers.—*D'Aubigne's Reformation*.

This book of Revelation is also a witness to us of the point in question. The descriptions of Jesus, and of the throne of chapter iv, and of the judgment of the dead, are direct and literal. But the stars and candlesticks, and the Woman of Rev. xvii are mystic. The word 'signified' then, as it embraces both modes of representation, confines itself to neither of them, and so, is no proof of enigma.

Lastly, at the close of the book we read, "He saith unto me, SEAL NOT the sayings of THE PROPHECY of this book:" xxii, 10. If, now, they are to be interpreted as allegories, they are sealed. The sayings, then, of this prophecy are to be accepted like the sayings of most other prophecies, literally. The movement of God in our Lord's day was from judgment to mercy; and the mercy of God is a time of mystery. Our Lord on the earth was moving from the letter to the spirit; and men of the letter misunderstood him, as we see, throughout the Gospels, especially that of John. But in the Apocalypse God is moving *away from mystery*, and its *day of mercy*, to *justice*, and its awful *manifestation of God*. To understand then the book

which treats of God's revelation of Himself in judgment, as spoken enigmatically, is but again to misunderstand the Most High.

We are agreed, that if the Apocalypse be literal, it foretells miracle. And if miracle be foretold, it is yet future. Now, miracles of judgment, belonging to a day to come, are foretold in books of Scripture confessedly not symbolic. Moses and the prophets foretell such judgments, and they are literally to be taken. Then, if we take the Apocalypse literally, it also foretells miracles of judgment in a day of woe to come. Both then correspond, and both are to be taken literally. You can only get quit of such result by taking the Apocalypse as symbolic. But the plagues may not so be taken, unless no good sense results from the literal acceptation. And then you throw the Old Testament prophets out of connexion and harmony with the New Testament prophecy.

Moreover, Naturalists are forced to admit miracle and literality in chapter xx. But in such admission they are inconsistent. They have trampled down literality and miracle in previous parts of the prophecy. And they can draw no line that is not arbitrary, between the parts which they own literal and miraculous, and those they deny to be so.

To remove miracles from the Apocalypse Mr. Guinness is obliged to make it symbolic, and to turn it from its literal sense. But to make it symbolic is to make it a 'veiled,' a 'sealed,' an 'enigmatic' book (p. 85), and so to destroy its avowed character, as designated of God. It is a 'revelation' no longer.

In short, the matter is a question about the reader's state of mind. If he be a man of faith in miracle as yet to come, he will find the Apocalypse in the main easy of comprehension. He will see in it, (1) a *day of judgment* to come on the living and the dead; and (2) *miracles* as the means to effect it.

If otherwise, he will stumble at every step ; he falls into many and manifest *confusions*. The time of lawlessness under a veil is confounded with lawlessness in open and national outbursts of word and deed. The 'kings' of Revelation are both 'kingdoms,' and 'forms of government.' 'The kings of the earth,' are confounded with 'the ten kings,' who only rise when the Anti-christ does. The Woman is confounded with the Wild Beast, which destroys the Woman. The Presence of the Lord is confounded with the Day of the Lord. Rome is made both the 'temple of God' and the 'Apostacy.' The Bride of Revelation is confounded with the Bride of the Epistles. All this is the result of predictions of judgment thrust out of their place into our dispensation of mercy.

The matter is of solemn moment. May the Lord bless to his saints the word of warning !

THE END.